

The Washington Post  
The New York Times  
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The Wall Street Journal  
The Christian Science Monitor  
New York Daily News  
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The Chicago Tribune

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## Why SDI needs a jump-START

**D**uring the Persian Gulf war the entire world was amazed at pictures illustrating the accuracy of high-tech American airplanes and ordnance. But even though our pilots enjoyed absolute control of the skies over Iraq, there wasn't much they could do on cloudy evenings to stop Saddam Hussein's terrorists from rolling out primitive, truck-mounted Scud missiles and launching them in the direction of Tel Aviv. Had Saddam had nuclear warheads, these much-derided and highly inaccurate missiles would have been plenty accurate to execute a latter-day Holocaust, or at least credibly threaten one.

To terrorize the world, Saddam would not have needed the 10-warhead, rail-mobile SS-24 and the one-warhead, truck-mounted SS-25 intercontinental ballistic missile which round out the Soviet nuclear stockpile. Nor would he have needed the so-called "Satan" SS-18 Mod-5 heavy ICBM, which carries as many 14 warheads.

No, Saddam would not have needed them. But Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, who is asking the West for tens of billions in aid, thought he needed them so badly that he has spent far more money than he can ever get back in Western aid to develop, improve and deploy these weapons of mass destruction.

Why? Because they are the chips that buy the Soviets a superpower seat in the game of world politics. If Mr. Gorbachev were to surrender his ability to annihilate the American or European peoples, he would have little influence over the policies of the West.

Mr. Gorbachev may be too shrewd and subtle a poker player to ever flash his revolver openly. But some of his subordinates are not. Last week, for example, Col. Viktor Alksnis, whom former Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze dubbed the "Black Colonel," warned the West of nuclear annihilation if it refused to dump more lucre into the Kremlin's coffers. "If civil war here is unavoidable, it will involve nuclear arms

and weapons of mass destruction," he told a British magazine. "Yes, we shall perish, but we shall take the whole world to the grave. You will perish with us. There will be no borders. The conflict will splash over them, first into neighboring countries, then into a world catastrophe."

Meanwhile, CIA Director William Webster told reporters last week there is evidence that the Soviets themselves are uneasy about securing their nukes in a civil war. And Bill Gertz reported in The Washington Times that a recent CIA report reveals that the Soviets have recently deployed 18 new launchers for SS-24 missiles. Just last August, Mr. Shevardnadze promised the United States that no new such launchers would be deployed after January.

How is the Bush administration responding to the Soviet bluff and bluster and continuing nuclear arms buildup? Mainly by pulling out all the stops to advance a strategic arms reduction treaty.

Unfortunately, the START treaty that Mr. Bush hopes to sign will work to the detriment of U.S. security. It will increase the power of the Soviet nuclear arsenal relative to the U.S. deterrent. Major treaty safeguards have been negotiated away. Mobile missiles, which America has never built, will not be banned. Thus Soviet SS-24s and SS-25s will remain. Modernization of missiles will continue. A force of 308 Soviet SS-18 "Mod 4s" will be reduced to 154 SS-18 "Mod 5s." The 154 Mod 5s could do the same job as 308 Mod 4s.

America failed to counter Saddam's Scuds with moral suasion and a flight wing of Stealth fighters. But we did knock some down with a primitive anti-ballistic missile called the Patriot. If Mr. Bush wants to secure America against the threat posed by the Soviet nuclear buildup and Soviet civil instability, he should push energetically to persuade Congress that now is the time to rejuvenate America's strategic deterrent and begin building the Strategic Defense Initiative.